# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1348
ANSWERED ON:24.07.2017
Heavy School Bags
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**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the Government has any proposal to reduce the book load carried by the children to the schools and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether the Government has offered suggestion to the CBSE and NCERT etc. that text books be printed in at least two volumes so that the children carry less heavy books to the school and if so, the details thereof;
(c) whether the Government has any proposal to issue tablets for the use of the children in the classes in lieu of the books and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether the Government has issued any directive that the Schools should provide RO system and be allowed to wear sports shoes so that the need to carry water bottle and schools shoes are dispensed with;
(e) whether the Government is planning or making any guidelines to use 'e-schooling' in all the 'Kendriya Vidyalaya' to avoid the school bags for the small/junior wings and if so, the details thereof;
(f) whether any directions/guidelines has been issued to the Kendriya Vidyalayas to get update this kind of technology; and
(g) if so, the timelimit and expenditure likely to come to set up these kind of e-schooling classes

## Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA)
(a) to (c) The Government have received a number of suggestions to reduce the weight of school bags, including dividing the books into two volumes. Several initiatives have already been taken in this regard and the Ministry is coordinating the efforts being made by different organizations/institutions in this regard. Some of the initiatives taken in this regard are as under:
i. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has recommended only two books (Language and Mathematics) for classes I & II and three books for Classes III to V (Language, Environmental Studies and Mathematics). NCERT has also made available all their textbooks for free access through the web (epathshala.nic.in) and mobile devices.
ii. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has directed schools affiliated to it to ensure that students do not carry school bags till Class II. In its latest circular dated 12th September, 2016, it has advised all its affiliated schools to take all possible measures to keep the weight of school bag under control.
iii. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan has taken a number of steps to promote digital learning in its Vidyalayas. To begin with, all the students of class VIII in 25 Kendriya Vidyalayas (One KV from each region) shall be provided with good quality Tablets on PILOT BASIS. The students will use these Tablets as also their teachers for Mathematics and Science for enhancing their core skills in these subjects.
iv. Under the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) component of Integrated Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Programme, a total of 14704 tablets for schools have been approved for administrative/teaching purposes in various States/UTs in 2017-18.
Besides, several State Governments have also taken commendable steps in this direction. For example:
? Maharashtra has started Digital schools and more than 50,000 schools are being upgraded to digital education. It has compiled quality digital material online through a user-friendly mobile app MITRA.
? Tamil Nadu which has introduced trimester system in all schools for classes I to VIII to reduce the load of books. This system ensures that the children need to carry only the books needed for the relevant term, which will substantially reduce the book load of children physically and also remove the psychological fear in the young minds.

(d) The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 specifies that the all-weather school buildings should have safe and adequate drinking water facility to all children. All States and Union Territories (UTs) have been directed to ensure that the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009 regarding drinking water is complied with and that all schools including those under the non-Government sector have the provision for safe and adequate drinking water facility for all children. The State Governments and UT Administrations are supported for creation and augmentation of infrastructural facilities including construction of drinking water facilities in government primary & upper primary schools under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Scheme. State Governments, UT Administrations and local authorities are free to install Reverse Osmosis (RO) machines in schools based on requirement, to ensure provision of safe and pure drinking water to the children. Various infrastructure facilities including drinking water facilities in existing and new government secondary schools are also provided under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Scheme. Under the Scheme, drinking water facilities have been approved for 24546 secondary schools till date.

The CBSE has also issued directions to schools affiliated to it to ensure adequate supply of potable and safe drinking water for everybody and counsel students not to bring the heavy water bottle to schools. The students of these schools need not carry extra pair of sportswear throughout the day and are allowed to wear it for the entire day.

Education being a subject in the Concurrent List of the Constitution and the majority of schools are under the jurisdiction of the State Governments, it is for the respective State/Union Territory Government to take appropriate measures to reduce the weight of schools bags of the children studying in their schools.

(e) to (g) The Government has not issued any direction or guidelines regarding 'e-schooling' in all the Kendriya Vidyalayas.

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